THE CROSBY VOICE

NEWSLETTER OF THE VICTORIAN BING CROSBY SOCIETY
Registered for posting as a periodical - Category B.
Issue No. 15 November 1980

Hello again,

Where did 1980 go?! Here it is, early November already and Christmas only a few weeks away. Actually, in some parts of Melbourne, notably the Myer Emporium, Christmas arrived in mid-October when that noted department store started selling festive decorations! Makes you wonder whether it's worth their trouble to actually take the things down and put them away every January.

Christmas of course means another seventy-odd thousand copies of Bing's 'Merry Christmas' LP will be sold in Australia alone. Could it be the same people buying new copies every Christmas as gifts to themselves? Who is buying all those LP's? New people discovering the Crosby magic, hopefully.

Of course, 'Merry Christmas' is not the only Crosby Christmas LP. There's a 'Christmas sing around the world with Bing' taken from a 1955 radio broadcast, 'A time to be jolly' (since re-issued as 'A Christmas Toast') from the early 1970's and 'I wish you a Merry Christmas' originally issued on Warner Brothers label but since re-issued by a different company. Those three LP's are available in town this year and are well worth having if you like Crosby Christmas music.

Speaking of Christmas songs, in our Collector's Corner on page 20 of this issue, we feature a reproduction of Bing's first solo Xmas record label from 1935 A very rare recording.

I hope you'll find quite a lot of interest in this, our biggest newsletter to date. In the centre pages, we feature the first five pages of a ten page article on Bing and his family, taken from a 1962 issue of 'LOOK' magazine. The second half of the article will appear in our next issue.

We also have another review of Ken Barnes' fine book 'The Crosby years' on pages 5 and 6 plus an early review (supplied by Frank Smith of New York) of Kathryn's book 'A very good round'. Sounds like a very interesting book and from the review, it should be one of the first

to give us a little insight into the other side of the Crosby character. Still to come, of course, are Gary Crosby's book and another by a man who has apparently been 'digging' into the negative side of Bing's life. Whilst I welcome books that give a balanced view of the man's character, I'm not so sure that the latter above is especially desirable. I haven't read the book on Errol Flynn yet, but I believe that it's packed with new 'revelations'. (Come to think of it, a 'revelation' on Errol Flynn would surely have to be that he wasn't as bad as people have said over the years!)

A change you'll notice about this issue of the Crosby Voice is that the back cover actually carries an advertisement! Thelma Wood has persuaded her friends at Le Mans Toyota to contribute to the cost of printing this newsletter in return for the back page. As this will permit us to greatly enlarge our photo page section without placing a drain on club funds, I was happy to agree. As you'll see, Le Mans Toyota will give special consideration to any member of this club who is interested in buying a new Toyota.

There is also another advertisement featured on page 29 but this is purely due to the Crosby reference in the headline and is included for interest only.

October 14th saw the passing of the 3rd anniversary of Bing's death. I didn't notice too many tributes around although I'm told that Bert Newton devoted part of his show to Bing on that day.

Three years on, awareness of Bing still seems to be as high as ever, although record releases do seem to be tapering off somewhat. Radio broadcasts are still the primary source of 'new' Crosby song material, in particular the fine LP's turned out in England by Ken Barnes although there are still a number of Bing's Decca period titles as yetun-reissued on LP.

Well, that's enough for this somewhat rambling introduction Let's lead off, as always, with future functions.

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FUTURE FUNCTIONS

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SUNDAY NOVEMBER 16TH - ANNUAL BARBECUE

Every year, about this time, as long-term members will know, we hold a barbecue. Last year, the pleasant venue was the lovely bushland setting of Ken Orren's Healesville home; this year, bearing in mind the high cost of petrol, we have chosen a little closer to the G.P.O. Thelma Wood has kindly offered us the use of her Cheltenham home (weather and Frank permitting)

As usual, we will supply the meat, bread and sweets but we ask you to bring along salad and drinks.

During the afternoon, we will be conducting auctions, raffles, etc and collectors please note, two of the prizes will be the very hard-to-obtain LP's: 'Bing Crosby on V Disc' (Japanese DAN label) and 'A tribute to Bing Crosby' (U.S. Libra VII label).

ADDRESS: 47 Wingrove St, Cheltenham
(Enquiries: 95 9846)

TIME: 11.00 am - 7.00 pm

ENTRY: Members: $2.50 per head
(children under 14: $1.50)

Non-members: $ 3.50 per head

Pensioners: $1.50 per head

MONDAY DECEMBER 1ST - FILM EVENING

"EMPEROR WALTZ" (1948) PLUS EDITED HIGHLIGHTS FROM "THE HOLLYWOOD REVIEW OF 1929"

Our last function for the year features a Crosby movie that has not been shown on TV for many a long year, and we are lucky enough to have a colour print of the film. However, we should point out that the colour has faded a little in parts of the print to a pinky-red tone It's quite watchable, however, we do mention the point now to forstall any criticism on the night!

'Emperor Waltz' co-stars Joan Fontaine and features the songs 'Friendly mountains', the lovely title number and a song Bing first recorded back in 1929:'I Kiss Your hand madam'.

As a support, we will be showing edited highlights from the spectacular 1929 production'Hollywood Review of 1929'. Amongst the film clips are Cliff Edwards presenting 'Singing in the rain' and Joan Crawford singing and dancing 'Got a feeling for you'.

Venue, as always, is the theatrette of the Mobil Building, 2 City Road, South Melbourne. As we plan to start right on the dot of 7.30 PM, please plan to arrive about 7.15.

Entry: Members $2.00
Families $5.00
Pensioners and junior members $1
Non-members $4

For further details, ring Bob Machliss 523 9263 after 7.00

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PAST FUNCTIONS
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MONDAY AUGUST 25TH - MUSIC EVENING/FILM SCREENING

More than 50 members attended this successful evening and took home books, records and Crosby badges.

Peter deRYK was delighted to win his copy of the 4 LP set featuring both the double LP's "Bing Crosby- the early jazz years" and "Bing Crosby in Hollywood" and other members took away copies of the Bob Thomas book "The Crosby Years".

Many thanks to Bill Bennett who supplied the music for the evening including another inimitable music quiz.

In addition to the music, several short films were screened that night: "Hollywood and the Stars" (featuring Bing), "All Star Bond Rally" (1945), "Rufus Jones for President" (made in 1933 and starring a very young Sammy Davis Jr)

cont.../7

Australasian POST, July 24, 1980

Casual, yet incomparable

Bing once described himself as: "A simple guy who can carry a tune." Altogether he "carried" more than 2000 of them all around the world

"FRANK SINATRA is the kind of singer who comes along once in a lifetime but why did it have to be in my lifetime?"

The "old groaner" made that remark in the early 1940s when Sinatra was starting his own climb to the top of showbusiness.

But Bing needn't have worried. He had a virtual stranglehold, musically speaking, on the 1940s.

In that decade he cut a string of smash hits like his immortal rendition of the Irving Berlin classic "White Christmas" made in 1942. His recording sold over 100 million.

Without much shadow of a doubt Bing had the most successful solo career in the history of show business.

It took him six years to find his singing feet knocking about with small jazz and vocal groups, but when his relaxed, unmistakable crooning clicked with the public nothing could hold him back.

Bing not only made it as a recording artist by dominating the hit parades of the 1930s, 40s and 50s, but as a film star he was the world's number one box office personality for five straight years from 1944 to 1949.

His film career in fact spanned three decades and along the way he picked up an Academy Award for Best Actor in the film "Going My Way" (1944).

This is an affectionate account of the Crosby career and a detailed analysis of Crosby's recording career from 1926 to 1977. It should delight any Crosby fan.

The story is told by Ken Barnes, a UK record producer, journalist and musician. Barnes produced six record albums with Crosby and worked closely with the old groaner right up to Bing's death in 1977.

In producing those records in England with Crosby, Barnes became one of the rare people to really get to know the man behind the Crosby legend.

The first time he met Bing he was slightly overawed at the Crosby presence and was amazed to see that Crosby was not wearing the familiar hairpiece to conceal a vanished hairline.

Bing emerges in this short biography as a fairly tough and demanding person who strived for perfection in others.

Barnes remembers how on one occasion during a recording session in London Crosby refused to do an extra take of a song that had given sound engineers some problems.

He reluctantly agreed to revoice eight bars of the song — no more, and only once more.

But after the recording session Bing noticed a junior engineer holding a telephone at arm's length trying to pick up his voice in a playback of the song.

The lad nervously told the great Bing his mother, an avid Crosby fan, was on the end of the line. Bing took the phone and sang the entire tune — not just the eight bars he had so grudgingly agreed to do again.

Barnes can never figure out why Bing behaved like that.

Crosby had a fantastic public image, an image he kept through his career. The early Crosby years featured a fair bit of womanizing and boozing but after he settled down and got crooning, Crosby, says Ken Barnes, became Mr Respectability.

Bing lived a quiet private life free of controversy and sensational goings on. He lived for his family and his church. He was a staunch Catholic and played the part of a priest in three motion pictures.

His first marriage was to starlet Dixie Lee who died in 1952. In 1957 he married another actress — Kathryn Grant. He sired seven children from the marriages.

One of his passions was golf. In fact he collapsed and died on a Spanish golf course in 1977, leaving behind a permanent record of his enormous contribution to entertainment.

He had major roles in 54 feature films and made more than 2000 records.

What made Bing so distinctively different from other singers? Ken Barnes puts it down to charm of a special and timeless kind, a voice that defied fashion and made nonsense of the generation gap.

Barnes says that while Crosby sang many of the world's most romantic songs he never displayed any obvious sex appeal, a quality found in the voice of Frank Sinatra and projected vocally and visually by Elvis Presley.

Bing might have been demanding in his work and fairly tough on his family but he was, says Barnes, a very modest man — modest about his wealth, position and career.

But the man who sold more records than any other performer in history once remarked to Ken Barnes! "My talent is so thin, it's almost transparent."

Barnes, and millions of Crosby fans all over the world, would never agree with him.

(Past functions Cont. from page 4)

and "Hurry Hurry" - a short film featuring W C Fields taken from his feature 'Never give a sucker an even break'.

Unfortunately, the hoped-for 1932 cartoon "Crosby, Columbo and Valley" did not arrive from the USA and, in fact, will now not be coming. The supplier tells us that the film is no longer available. Too bad. We were all looking forward to seeing that film

DINNER DANCE - Bing's Restaurant - September 20th.

Thanks to the efforts of Thelma Wood, Les Saynor and the other members of the Social Committee, the evening was a great event.

More than 60 people turned up for the evening and enjoyed a very pleasant dinner turned on by the staff at Bing's. We had, of course, the whole restaurant to ourselves.

Music was supplied by Bill Bennett via cassette and a mobile dance floor hired for the night to keep the dancers happy.

During the evening, we gave away a whole pile of Crosby books (The Complete Crosby - Charles Thompson), a number of Crosby LP's and, in a special raffle, a gold digital watch donated by Le Mans Toyota. The lucky winner of the watch was Laurie Roberts and you can see a picture of Laurie holding his prize on page 30.

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IN MEMORIUM - HERB BOOTMAN

It's our sad task to announce the recent passing of well-known American collector - Herb Bootman. Al Sutton, President of the Club Crosby writes:

"Herb hadn't been feeling too well for a short time, having had a touch of the flue, but he seemed to be on the mend. Last Sunday night, his wife went to bed,

leaving Herb happily in front of his television set, telling Bobbie he would be along later. Awakening early Monday, Bobbie found that Herb hadn't yet come to bed, and when she went to waken him, Herb was gone - in his sleep, and apparently without warning or pain.

All who have known Herb Bootman have been fortunate to know a really happy man - happy with his family, with multitudes of friends - happy with his Crosby collecting, and with his new love, video cassette recording. His collection of Bing movies on cassette had grown to enviable size.

Helpful - friendly - always smiling - full of enthusiasm for life and its challenges - respected by acquaintances, loved by friends.

Another good man gone, and there weren't enough to begin with!

Al Sutton."

On receipt of Al's letter, we immediately sent a card to Herb's widow on behalf of all the members. A few weeks later, we received the following reply:

"Thank you and all your members for the message of sympathy.

The unexpected death of Herbie was, of course, a dreadful shock, but I am truly thankful that he did not suffer. He was so excited about his new hobby of video taping and had plans to keep him busy for years.

Your kind thoughts are a great help to me.

Bobbie Bootman."

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14 LP AL BOWLLY SET - NOW IN AUSTRALIA!

Because many Crosby collectors are also Bowlly collectors, we are happy to bring you news that the 14 LP set featuring 213 Noble/Bowlly tracks issued by World Records in the UK is now available through World Record Club here. Cost: $90.50 or in three instalments of $33.00 each Address: 605 Camberwell Rd, Hartwell, Vic. 3124.

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RECORD NEWS

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As we said at the start of this newsletter, issues of new records are in rather short supply these days.

Almost certainly there are some new radio show LP's out in the USA, but details are not yet to hand.

Ken Henderson at the Bentleigh Sewing and Record Centre, 348 Centre Road, Bentleigh, writes that he will have a new shipment any day now (perhaps already) of U.S. material, so why not call in and see what he has. Ken offers a discount to all members of the club.

Another shop offering discounts to club members is Cunninghams Record Centre, 80 Church St, Brighton.

NEW JAPANESE ISSUE

The soundtrack LP of 'Robin and the Seven Hoods' originally issued in 1965 has been reissued in Japan.

Kyoichi Muneta, our Japanese member, is always keen to obtain records from other countries and may be able to help you obtain a copy.

Kyoichi's address: 1-19-21 Nakakosaka
Higashi-Osaka 577
Japan

TAPES FOR SALE

Two overseas members offer cassette tapes for sale. Both members come from the U.K. and neither offers material that duplicates that offered by the other.

Firstly, Jonathan Russell

Jonathan has cassettes of three series of Crosby radio shows covering the years 1946 - 54, that is, Bing's Philco, Chesterfield and General Electric Shows. For further details, write to Jonathan at

10 Roxburgh Road
Westgate-on-sea
Kent CT8 8 RX
ENGLAND

Secondly, Arnold Baker

Arnold is the Tape Office of the Bing Crosby Photo-Tape Club and has such has issued over 60 two-hour cassettes of various Crosby tracks.

It's impossible to cover everything here that Arnold has available but briefly, it covers:

Kraft Music Hall radio material from the 1930's, KXL Radio (Portland Oregon) announcer John Salisbury's many excellent series on Bing, the BBC series on Bing, Bing - Buddy Cole - Rosemary Clooney from radio, movie soundtracks, etc etc etc.

For further details, please write to:

Arnold Baker
Cherrytree House
48 Groomsport Rd
Bangor
Co. Down
Northern Ireland
United Kingdom

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BING CROSBY COLLECTION FOR SALE FOR SERIOUS COLLECTORS!!

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Robert W. Murphy, 131 East 35 Street, Brooklyn 11203, New York, U.S.A.invites enquiries about the following:

- Over 1000 original recordings from Bing's first recording in 1926.
- One discography book in mint condition published by "Mello's Music" of California 1926 - 1950 inclusive.
- Hundreds of glossy movie stills (Documented)
- Personal snapshots
- Signed letters of correspondence
- Books written by Bing Crosby
- Magazines of Bing in the 1930's and 40's.

- Club Crosby Magazines (Bing Bang)
- Sheet music of Bing
- 100 tapes of Bing's feature movies and of Bing and Rosemary Clooney from Feb 29, 1960 Onwards.

  Tapes of all records in collection
- Ten records of Bing on Philco Radio Time 1947 & 48
- Dick Tracy Series Record
- Tapes of Bing's featured radio and TV shows
- A few army discs and fifty full or empty 78 album covers.

Please address all enquiries to Robert Murphy.

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NEWS FROM THE BING CROSBY HISTORICAL SOCIETY!

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(Extracts from the BCHS Newsletter #8 - October 1980)

- The BCHS is soliciting donations of memorabilia. This is very valuable material that will help us serve members with information and make tapes, books, etc available to them. Someday this will all be put together in a permanent home to become an important collection of Crosbyana.
- An All-American Rose Selection by the American Rose Society is named the "Bing Crosby" Rose. Weeks Rose Growers in Ontario, California has sent 70 bushes to the BCHS. Twenty were planted at the County City Building in Tacoma and the remaining fifty were sent to Point Defiance Park where a beautiful rose bed has been constructed.
- By the time you read this, the Bing Crosby Enterprises office in Beverly Hills will be no more. The office was to be closed in August, and along with that goes two very fine ladies who worked many years for Bing and were at the office until the last: Nancy Briggs and Moselle Seger.

- Father Dussault, S.J., Vice President of Gonzaga University, has advised BCHS that the dedication of the larger-than-life statue of Bing has been delayed until April, 1981.

- Plans for the Tribute Record #3 are now in progress. This year the record will be given to all those who attend the annual tribute. Since there will only be 300 records produced, they truly will be collectors' items! For those who cannot attend the tribute, the record will be available on a first come, first served basis. Get your orders in now.

  (N.B. Ken Twiss normallysupplies us with 20 copies for Australian distribution. If you would like to reserve one of these, write to me now. BM)

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LETTER FROM KEN TWISS

We now have an editor for the newsletter and that relieves me of a lot of work.

A lot is going on Bingwise. The ICC in the UK is having a dinner on the 28th. That should be a great event. (Note: We sent a greetings tape to the ICC from the VBCS here in Melbourne to be played on the night. BM)

We are trying to start a luncheon movie once a week. We have most things ready to go. The idea is to attract a few more people to our office.

Soon we will start a building fund to purchase Bing's birthplace. Will keep you informed about that.

BCHS is growing rapidly, and that means a lot of work, for which I am grateful. It is a nice feeling to be busy doing something that is enjoyable.

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JOIN THE BING CROSBY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NOW!

Membership is only US$10.00 per annum and well worth the money. Address: PO Box 8013, Tacoma, Wash. 98403 USA

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ROAD TO MOROCCO - A CURRENT APPRAISAL

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(The following appeared in the New Yorker magazine in their film pages and seemed worthyof reprint.)

Road to Morocco (1942)

Maybe you have to have seen the Bob Hope-Bing Crosby road movies (comedies with songs and a lot of patter) when they came out to understand the affection people felt for them, and to appreciate how casually sophisticated theirstyle seemed at the time. The pictures haven't weathered as well as thirties comedies, because they were satirizing melodramas that are already forgotton. The series spoofed the fancy backgrounds of adventure movies; Hope and Crosby ambled through exotic, nonsensical lighthearted situations with no pretense to believability.

They took the thud out of the dumb gags and topical jokes by their amiable comedy intimacy. And the rare good jokes shone in the unpretentious atmosphere.

Hope and Crosby's rapport has great charm and every once in a while, Hope does something - a gesture or a dance movement - that is prodigiously funny. Dorothy Lamour is their joint inamorata and the foil of the series; inimitably out of it, she was taken from the pictures being satirized and she played in the same coy, eager-to-please manner. The best song here is "Moonlight becomes you".David Butler directed; Frank Butler and Don Hartman did the script.

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OPPOSITE PAGE - "LOOK" MAGAZINE

Starting with this issue, we present the first five pages of a ten page article on Bing and Kathryn and family which appeared in Look, July 17, 1962. The second five pages will appear next month. If you have an old magazine featuring an article on Bing, would you like to lend it to us for these pages. It will be photographed and returned undamaged.

LOOK

NEW ATTACK ON DREAD PARKINSON'S DISEASE

25¢ · JULY 17, 1962

EXCLUSIVE NEW PICTURES OF BING CROSBY'S SECOND FAMILY

BING'S SECOND FAMILY

BING'S SECOND FAMILY continued

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Life at the Crosbys' is always active

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

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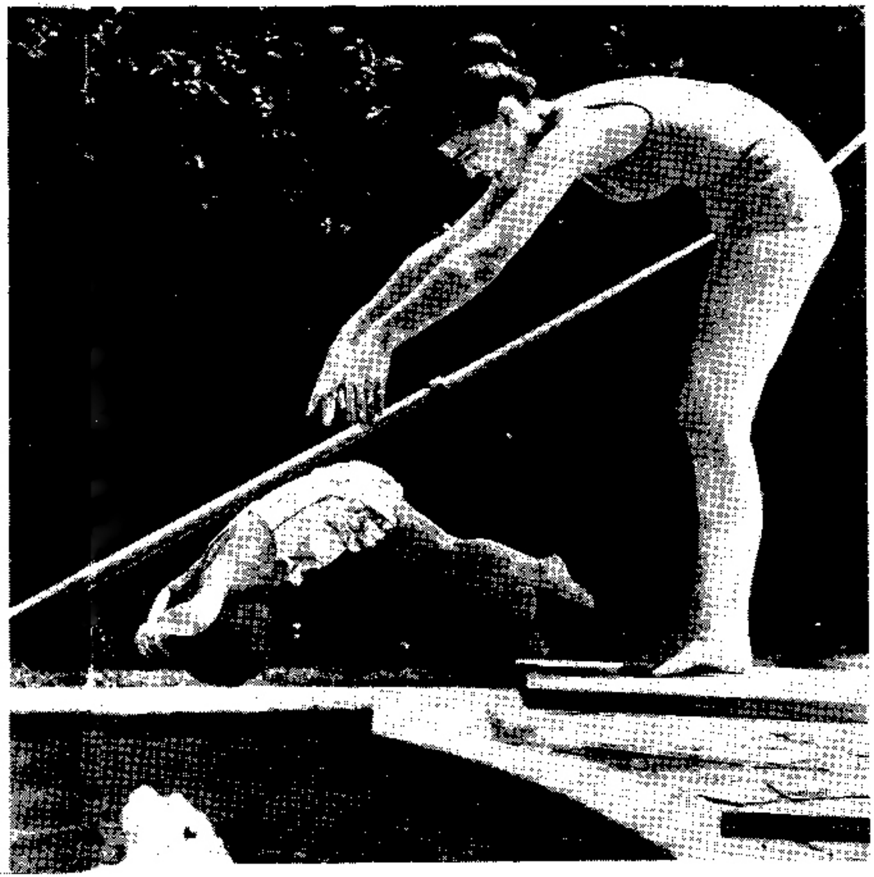

COLLECTOR'S CORNER

Most Crosby fans, whether collectors or not, should recognize the title of this LP although not the cover. The jacket used in most countries featured a sketch of Bing and Kathryn. This however, is the Japanese issue of that familiar record. Thanks to member Kyoichi Muneta who supplied this one.

DECCA SPECIAL LABEL

Shown above are both sides of a special 78 issued by Decca in 1935 to benefit the St. Columban Missionary Society. 'Silent Night' was recorded on Feb.21 1935. Side 2 features three songs recorded by Bing for a now-lost short film made in 1934, also to support the missionary. These songs are Bing's first solo Xmas records.

HIGH WATER

In many ways, one of the most interesting of Bing's Paul Whiteman recordings. Recorded on Feb. 28, 1928 it features a long, dramatic solo reading from Bing midway through and gives us a very good idea of the speaking voice of young Crosby

THE OLD GROANER WAS A REAL MOANER —says his wife

BING CROSBY was not the warm, sympathetic, happy-go-lucky guy he portrayed in more than 50 movies, says his widow, Kathryn Crosby.

He was often a hard taskmaster with his family and it was difficult for him to express affection, Kathryn reveals in her second book about her husband, Bing: A Very Good Friend. She recalls walking into a room of their Hillsboro, California, mansion one day to find Bing shaking hands with their son Harry.

She asked what he was doing, and Bing replied: "Why, I'm saying Happy Birthday to Harry. He's three years old today."

Kathryn stormed: "He's your son, not a business contact. You throw your arms around him, hug him, kiss him and tell him you love him."

Bing obeyed, though he did find the scene embarrassing.

When Harry was older, he admitted: "He loved us all. We knew that. It was just difficult for him to show it or put it in words."

Kathryn explains that, while Bing did agree with her decision to become a registered nurse, he never took her too seriously.

He was proud of her achievements — except when it interfered with his life.

"One night I came home after a long day at the hospital and Bing snapped, 'Where have you been?' " Kathryn says.

"I was wearing my uniform that still had the blood from an emergency case on it. I quipped, 'Can't you tell? I've been out shooting pool with the fellas.' "

Kathryn also remembers her husband, who died in 1977, as a rigid disciplinarian.

"He had a fixed schedule for everything," she says.

"I had a TV talk show in San Francisco and that was okay with him as long as I was home in time to tend his needs.

"When we were watching a movie after dinner on TV, no matter how exciting it was, on the dot of 10, he would go up to bed."

His coolness in company is confirmed by others who came in contact with Bing. One business associate recalls the time he and the singer drove 100 miles, during which Crosby never spoke a word to him.

Carroll Carroll, the man who wrote Crosby's quips and "ad libs" for radio's Kraft Music Hall, says that during their long association he can count the number of times Crosby spoke to him — ON ONE HAND.

"Bing gave away hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of dollars to various charities," says one close friend.

"But he never wanted his name mentioned. When he heard of a person he knew who was down and out, he would help them financially.

"He tried to do it quietly, because when they showed gratitude you could see Bing was terribly embarrassed."

Bing's close friend Bob Hope once put it: "Bing gave a boost to a lot of people starting out in show business. But when one of them said this in an interview, Bing never spoke to him again.

"I personally think Bing was a wonderful, generous guy. But once we stopped working before the cameras, he became cool and business-like. He was never the clown off-camera."

— BRIAN LAWRENCE

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BITS AND PIECES

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* That Vintage Record man, Nevin Walker, continues to make slow progress along the road to recovery. Nevin did open his shop one Saturday morning last May but it was to be for one day only. In the meantime, Thomas's Records in the city (located at the Southern Cross Hotel) have started selling Nevin's stock to help him out a little. There were a few Crosby tracks the day I was there plus many other interesting 78's. Well worth a look and you'll be helping one of the best-liked men in Melbourne record collecting circles.

* Our U.S.A. rep, Richard Pearson has offered to order copies of the Libra VII LP "Tribute to Bing Crosby" for Australian members, and send them on to this country. The LP features a selection of Bing/Buddy Cole radio material from the late 1950's and is joined by dialogue featuring Bing and his announcer at the time, George Fennerman.

Please address all enquiries for discs to me at our club address: PO Box 422, South Melbourne, 3205.

If you'd like to write to Richard about anything else, the address of the VBCS is: PO Box 1481, Arlington Virginia 22210, U.S.A.

* Tommy Northrope tells us that the auction of LP's from the estate of the late Keith Hyde has been a great success. Thank you to all members who bid on that marvellous collection of records.

* RETRACTION. In an earlier issue of 'The Crosby Voice', we reported, in error, the passing of Bing's accompaniest Joe Bushkin. We humbly apologize for any embarrasment that our mistake may have made to Mr Bushkin and his family, and we hope that he enjoys a long and productive career.

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NEW MEMBERS

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It's been quite a while since we did a run down on all the new members who have joined; several months in fact! So let's make up for that lapse, here and now.

Richard Pearson 109 N.Wayne St, No.5, Arlington, Virginia, 22201. USA.

Kenneth E.Gray 1155 Pinewood Drive, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15243. USA.

Clifford Brisbois 7201 Lennox Ave, Apt 319, Van Nuys, California 91405, USA.

Beryl & Victor Bridger 43 Gordon Pde, Everton Park, Brisbane 4053.

Shirley & John Dixon You Yangs Rd, Lara (Box 85) 3212

Wig Wiggins Jr 5608 North 34th St, Arlington, Virginia 22207, USA.

Brian Lewis 8 Crosby Square, London, EC3 A6AN Billerkay 22813, England.

Sylvia Lawrence 27 Harvey Goodwin Ave, Cambridge CB4 3EX England.

Charles D. Baille 3230 La Encina Way, Pasadena, California 91107, USA.

Michael J. Ferruzza 307 E.Ravine, Peoria, Illinois 61603, USA.

Vance Sexton, 19 Burdett St, Hornsby, NSW 2077

Kay Dulfer-Hyams 21 Munro Ave, Mt Waverley Vic 3149

Fred Desjarlais 6611 Horse Shoe Bend, Orlando, Florida, 32807, USA.

Charles Chapman 76 Chick St, Punchbowl, Sydney, NSW 2196

Reg Andrews 2-401A Pitt St, Sydney 2000

John and Janet Kennedy 28 Garlepp St, Coldstream, Vic 3770

George Styles 43 Windsor Ave, Mt Waverley, Vic 3149

Angela Casabene 53 The Avenue, Windsor, Vic 3181

Robert Lundberg 401 Golden Gate, Tacoma, Wash.98466 USA

Lyndon Ware PO Box 3, Wonthaggi, Vic 3995.

Betty Margaret Harrison 8 Simpson St, SOmerset, Tas.7322

Leah Healy 95/200 Dorcas St, South Melb. 3205

David Duncan 10 Hope St, Pymble, Sydney, NSW 2073

Maree Rogers 12 Franklin Ave, Chelsea, Vic 3196

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BING ON THE RADIO 1930 - 60

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(The following article on Bing's radio career appeared in a book on the history of the performers in that medium. We reproduce it here for your interest.)

Bing Crosby first sang on the air while performing with Gue Arnheim's orchestra at the Coconut Grove, Los Angeles in 1930. It was there that he met Dixie Lee (born Wilma Winifred Wyatt), a beautiful starlet whose career had begun the year before with 'The William Fox Movietone Follies of 1929. Dixie played hard to get. It is said that Crosby's famous recording, "I Surrender Dear", was done for her. If so, it won him both fame and the lady. Dixie became his wife and - when brother Everett sent the record to the networks - Crosby was asked to audition for both NBC and CBS.

Offered jobs at both, he opted for CBS. His premiere was to be in late August 1931, but he was stricken with laryngitis and was unable to goon. By September 2, he had recovered and a young Harry Von Zell introduced him on a nationwide CBS hookup, 'Fifteen Minutes with Bing Crosby'. Crooning had come alive. For 15 minutes, Crosby buh-buh-booed his way through such numbers as 'Just one more chance' and 'I'm thru with love'.

Everything broke at once. With his first nationwide radio hookup, his star rose as fast as any in show business, and he became, almost overnight the super hot property eagerly sought by hucksters in three distinct show business entities.

The Big Broadcast

Crosby made the 'Big Broadcast of 1932' and settled into a hectic pace of two to three films a year. He began recording for Decca, and the following year he picked up Chesterfield as sponsor or a twice-a-week songfest. In 1933 the show landed in prime time as a weekly half-hour for Woodbury Soap.

Kraft Music Hall

Crosby's best radio shot came in 1935, when he left CBS to host NBC's popular 60 minute variety show, 'The Kraft Music Hall'. The hour long format suited his casual style just fine. It suited his audience too. His show - though never the blockbuster of the Jack Benny calibre - always got the major share of Thursday night listeners, usually finishing the year with a Hooper average in the low to mid-20's.

He stayed with Kraft for 10 years. As it developed, the Kraft show under Bing featured relaxed conversation, jokes, and music. Bob Burns, "The Arkansas Traveller", joined the regulars, and established himself as a tall-tale-teller about life back home.

Victor Borge, who escaped the Nazi invasion of his native Denmark, was booked as a comedian in 1942, and served as a Music Hall regular for a year. Borge's professional reputation as the 'devilish Dane', who might or might not be able to play the piano started (after a boost from Rudy Vallee) on the Kraft Music Hall.

In January 1942, Kraft lured Mary Martin from Broadway to sing in the Music Hall for about a year. Crosby also featured singer Peggy Lee, who would rejoin him on Philco Radio Time. Connie Boswell (sometimes spelled Connee) and Ginny Simms appeared often; so did great names from the world of jazz' Duke Ellington, Artie Shaw, the Dorsey Brothers, Jack Teagarden, Joe Venuti. Crosby brought Lional Barrymore to the microphone. Humphrey Bogart, still in the early stages of his career, made an appearance; other shows featured Frank Sinatra, Johnny Mercer, and Spike Jones and the City Slickers.

Bob Hope

The top headliner was Bob Hope. Whenever Hope and Crosby appeared together, ratings were high. Since the Road to Singapore, their first 'Road' film together, Hope and Crosby had established themselves as a loosely formed team. They appeared together a few times a year, just enough to rekindle the flame, then each returned to their own enterprises. Whenever Hope was around,

Crosby's low-key humour came off almost as straight, and Bing's shots were with his sometimes remarkable use of the King's English.

By 1943, Crosby was firmly established as one of radio's best-loved performers. His "When the blue of the night meets the gold of the day" had become one of the medium's classic themes. When his home was destroyed in a fire, thousands of listeners responded with gifts. Others sent a complete collection of his records. Some offered to replace the family dog, which had been lost in the blaze. Crosby had one quality in those wartime days that everyone liked; an image of honesty and integrity. In some of his offstage, secretly recorded performances, he also proved proved he could be difficult and moody, but that was the private man that America seldom saw.

Regulars

Regulars surrounded Crosby, and stayed with him for years. Carroll Carroll was a longtime writerduring the Kraft Years, serving as a lone script writer from 1936 to 1938 and as head writer thereafter. Ken Carpenter became his announcer of long standing, sticking through format changes from Kraft to Philco to Chesterfield to General Electric. John Scott Trotter was orchestra leader through most of the Kraft years, and through the end of Crosbys 30 minute GE show. Bill Morrow and Murdo MacKenzie produced and directed. In 1946, when he wanted to prerecord his shows he ran up against stiff NBC and Kraft resistance, so he quit the Kraft Music Hall which later returned as a vehicle for Al Jolson. Crosby moved to ABC and a brand new sponsor.

Philco Radio Time

The Philco-sponsored show was the first major transcribed network show, and many people in the trade were apprehensive about its chances. There was a general prejudice against 'canned' entertainment in radio; producers and many performers felt that the public just wouldn't buy it. Bing believed that the public didn't care either way. If something was good, who would care if it was live or coming from a disc? Recording allowed him to edit out

flat sections and produce a smooth 30 minute package. Rehersals and recording sessions could be scheduled at everyone's convenience. That was what Crosby wanted to do and that was that.

A clause was inserted into his contract, stipulating that he would return to live shows immediately if his Hooper fell below 12 for any four consecutive weeks. Philco Radio Time started with a bang on October 16, 1946, finishing high in the top ten its first week.

Crosby had opened with Bob Hope, but followed with a string of lesser-known guests. His ratings started to sag. By the end of the month, his Hooper had dropped to 12.2 and the doomsters were coming out of the woodwork. But it bottomed out there; more attention was given to scheduling, and Philco Radio time finished out the year with a respectable 16. The program ran on Wednesdays until June 1, 1949.

The Chesterfield Show

Crosby's Chesterfield Show was heard on CBS Wednesday nights from 1949 to 1952. In 1952, General Electric picked up the show, as a Thursday nighter and in 1953 it went to Sundays; the show went into a 15-minute daily format with Buddy Cole for various sponsors in 1954, and ran until 1956.

What Bing did best

On radio, Bing Crosby could do what he did best - simply be Bing Crosby. He didn't have to worry about neckties and pressed pants. If he was recreating the role of Father O'Malley for the Screen Guild Theatre, he didn't even need a priests collar. The listening audience 'saw' him in black, projecting the dignity of the church as he broke the news to a tearful Ingrid Bergman that she had tuberculosis. In fact, Crosby might have been wearing baggy pants with the tail of a hawaiian shirt sticking out over his belt. But that was one of the joys of the medium.

It was also one of the reasons why Crosby held out against television until the bitter end. General Electric,

sponsor of the show in the waning days, recognized the TV appeal of its star and finally added a clause to his contract, in effect penalizing him for every week he shunned the TV cameras. Crosby finally gave in, appearing on a series of TV specials. But he kept his radio show until slipping ratings caught up with everyone.

Crosby's career reached the heights on all fronts of entertainment. In films, he was top box office; his records sold in the millions. But radio first spread his name far and wide, as he developed that smooth, easy going, conversational style that (once his inital mike fright wore off) was described by friends as an extension of his real personality. It was radio that kept Crosby synonymous with top show business for three decades.

Crosby was still doing some radio work into the 1960's, but The Bing Crosby Show of old ended in 1954. He missed the broadcast of October 30, 1952, for his wife Dixie Lee died of cancer two days later, leaving him four sons. Crosby later remarried and continued making films at a one-a-year rate until the mid-1960's, when he eased into semi-retirement, to be seen thereafter in television specials and annual Christmas shows. END.

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Well, I hope you found that interesting. There were a number of small innacuracies, but they are of no great importance. However, Bing was on the radio regularly before 1930. As a member of Paul Whiteman's orchestra, he appeared often with the band leader on his weekly radio show. The wonderful book 'Bix - Man and Legend' actually lists the content of some of these broadcasts.

eg. JULY 2, 1929 OLD GOLD SHOW - KMTR - Harry Von Zell (announcer). i) Hitting the Ceiling, ii) Wildflower, iii) Wartime medley, iv) Waltz medley, v) My Sin (Crosby vocal), vi) Cigarette (concert arrangement), vii) Number Three (Rhythm Boys vocal), viii) Parade of the wooden soldiers, ix) You were meant for me (Crosby vocal), x) Makin' whoopie (Bix and Crosby), Xi) Red red rose, xii) Lady of the morning (Fulton vocal), xiii) Kewpie, xiv) Dardanella, xv) Honey (Crosby vocal), xvi) Little coat of tan xvii) I'm just wild about Harry. END. (NO DROOLING

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Laurie Roberts, winner of the gold digital watch donated by Le Mans Toyota as the main prize of our Dinner Dance raffle, shows off his prize.

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LETTERS

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From Richard Pearson, Arlington.

I have sent US members a sheet asking them if they would like to start up a correspondence list and mentioned the possibility of issuing a special newsletter near the end of the year. I also asked if any were interested in getting together an East Coast meeting. I expect some new members for the Victorian Bing Crosby Society to emerge after the latest Bingang comes out.

From Wig Wiggins, also Arlington.

I would like to say how pleased I am to have joined your club, even by long distance. For many years, I exchanged records with the late Jack Purches, although we never met in person. And in the last year or so, I have had the pleasure to entertain Graham and Margaret Reade and Gordon and Joy Wall here at my home in Virginia. I live just across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C.

From Lyndon Ware, Wonthaggi.

About that Crosby Columbo and Vallee cartoon you mentioned in your newsletter, you might like to hear about a Warner Brothers cartoon I saw on TV recently. It was about this man whose hens started to lose interest in the rooster he owned and whose egg production started to drop off. So the farmer brought in several other roosters to see which the hens would lay the most eggs for. Amongst the roosters were Al Bowlly, Russ Columbo, Rudy Vallee, Al Jolson and Bing. Each rooster sang in turn, and with each song, the hens produced more and more eggs. Finally, it was Bing's turn and he took his pipe out of his mouth and started to sing. As he finished, the place began to fill up with eggs until they blotted out the entire scene!

(Words fail me, Lyndon! Anyone know about this cartoon?)

BM

From Shirley Naylor, Orange.

Well, I finally made it to Crosby country and stayed from 22nd April til 19th May. I met Richard Pearson and had a wonderful time with him and heard all about his trip to Melbourne. I also spoke with Jimmy Johnson and his wife Phylis at Richmond. At Holy Cross Cemetary I found Bing's grave and it was very peaceful there. I had to go by taxi which cost me $54 odd but well worth it. The driver was a beaut chap who turned the meter off and walked around with me. My trip to Tacoma was wonderful. Ken Twiss is a very nice person and showed me all around. It is a trip I will remember for the rest of my life.

From Frank Smith, New York.

On Monday evening, September 8th, one of New York City's leading radio stations featured four hours of Bing's recordings and a personal interview that was conducted when he was at the Uris Theatre in 1976. Enclosed please find copies of the letters I sent to the station.

"Mr Jim Lowe, WNEW-FM Stereo, New York

Dear Jim, I want you to know that thousands of Bing's fans were tuned in to your magnificent program Monday night. If the ratings will indicate a true listening audience for Monday evening from 4 to 8, you had to be number one.

I wrote to Jonathan Schwartz earlier Monday morning telling him that I would be listening, but during the day I received many calls, and in turn called every Crosby fan I know to make sure they were listening in. It was great, not only did you play some of his best recordings, but I think, more than ever before, your interviews with some of his friends captured the true love and respect that everyone had for Bing. Not only am I a fan, but I was a personal friend of Bing's for over 30 years. I had the privilege and pleasure of travelling with him during his stay in New York for the Uris appearance, and it was at my request that he lit the Christmas tree, and sang White Christmas on the steps of City Hall that year."

(No space now. We'll save Frank's second letter for later)

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FROM OUT OF THE PAST
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Billboard, October 28th, 1933.
(Continued from last issue)

With Crosby and Hayton is a chorus of mixed voices that comes in occasionally, while a good piece of showmanship was a solo by a femenine vocalist about the middle of the program which seemed to offer the precise bit of relief and contrast. Hayton also injected some piano parts played by himself for further diversity of the musical end of the half hour. Crosby himself offered an excellent selection of ballads, mostly of the romantic type, and closed with 'The Last Roundup' for good measure. Orchestral interludes were well done, smooth and soft, plus plenty of rhythm. Show originated on the Coast, where Crosby, of course, is making pictures. Credits, done against a partly faded out musical background with the theme 'Beautiful Lady' leaned towards the lower price of the product and its value as a complexion requisite. These were not overdone considereing the background of Woodbury, which was used by many grandmothers of today when they were girls. END

The Melody Maker, July 1930
THE MONTHS OUTPUT reviewed by "Stylus"

Columbia, 10 inch, dark blue label, 3/-

PAUL WHITEMAN and His Orchestra
'A Bench in the Park' and 'Happy Feet' (CB86)
'Song of the Dawn' and 'I like to do things for you (CB87)
'Ragamuffin Romeo' and 'It happened in Monterey' (CB88)

Paul Whiteman's "King of Jazz" records are definitely going to disappoint his countless admirers in this country. There are indeed some very bad points in them. In the first title, for instance, there is a movement with a 6/8 effect which cannot be called clever, and the only bright spot is the guitar accompaniment by Ed.Lang to the Bronx (sic) Sisters' harmonised vocal. The same

criticism also applies to the first part of 'Happy Feet' though after the vocal by the Rhythm Boys, there is some splendid work by Frankie Trambauer on sax and Venuti on violin, while trumpet and guitar shine again. The general tone of the orchestra is far below Whiteman's high standard, however.

'Song of the Dawn' is a rousing chorus number and is treated as such with concerted male voices. Following this vocal, there is some magnificent team saxophone work picked up by Frankie Trambauer, solo, for a few brilliant bars, but this, with the exception of the short appearance of Venuti, finishes the interest in the title.

On the reverse, we have another disappointing effort. The drummer here drags in a bell note ad nauseam, but there is some compensation in a glimpse of a red hot trumpet by Frank (sic) Secrest, and some more magnificent guitar rhythm from Ed Lang.

'Ragamuffin Romeo' is a novelty fox-trot of the intermezzo type, and here the orchestra is more like the musicianly Whiteman outfit. Its interest, however, is necessarily confined to the arrangement. The waltz on the back is beautifully scored and played. END

The Melody Maker, September 1929
THE MONTH'S OUTPUT reviewed by "Pinhead"

PAUL WHITEMAN and His Orchestra
'Reaching for someone' and 'When my dreams come true'(5484

Whiteman has produced another fine record in 'Reaching for Someone'. There is a marvellous hot saxophone chorus by Frankie Trambauer and an equally marvellous vocal by Byng (sic) Crosby. The whole performance has that quality which always characterises Whiteman; the orchestration is excellent, and the balance marvellous. Traumbauer excels himself, but I am going to criticise the second half of his chorus - I don't like his first phrase of it a little bit, and I refuse to be blinded to its unmusicalness by by the fact that it is played by the one and only Frankie.

And that's where we'll have to leave it Bob Mackie
for this newsletter. See you at the barbecue,

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